Amendment to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawing includes editorial revisions to Fig. 8A. Sheet 1, which includes Figs. 8A and 8B, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 8A and 8B.

In amended Fig. 8A, a distance that is equivalent to a length Ls0 of a main body 11 of a septum 1 is illustrated to clarify that the length Ls0 of the main body 11 is smaller than a length Lc of a cover 6 at a portion for holding the main body 11 therein, when the septum 1 is not mounted inside the cover 6.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet (1)

REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Editorial revisions have been made in Fig. 8A. Support for the revisions can be found at, e.g., page 7, lines 1-5 of the present specification. Claims 1-22 remain pending in the application. Claims 20-22 have been withdrawn.

Objection to the Drawings

The drawings are objected to because 1) an inner-end plate that has an oval shape whose major axis extends in the same direction as the breadth direction of the main body, and 2) a length Ls0 of the main body that is smaller than a length Lc of the cover, are not illustrated. Applicant respectfully traverses the objection. Fig. 8A has been editorially revised.

Fig. 6A illustrates an oval shape inner-end plate 9 having a major axis, i.e., the long axis, in a vertical direction. Fig. 6A also illustrates by hatching a cross section of an oval shape main body 11 and compression ribs 12, which extends in a vertical direction. The oval shape main body 11 has a major axis, i.e., the long axis, in a horizontal direction, and a minor axis, i.e., the short axis, in a vertical direction. The breadth direction of the oval shape main body 11 is along the minor axis of the main body 11 in a vertical direction. Therefore, Fig. 6A clearly shows the inner-end plate 9 having an oval shape whose major axis extends in the same direction as the breadth direction of the main body 11, which is in the vertical direction in Fig. 6A.

Fig. 8A shows a distance that is equivalent to a length Ls0 of the main body 11 of a septum 1, which is smaller than a length Lc of the cover 6 at a portion for holding the main body 11 therein, when the septum 1 is not mounted inside the cover 6 (see page 7, lines 1-5 of the present specification).

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out an inner-end plate that has an oval shape whose major axis extends in the same direction as the breadth direction of the main body. We note that claim 3,

rather than claim 4, appears to be intended for this rejection. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. As discussed above, Fig. 6, for example, clearly shows an inner-end plate 9 that has an oval shape whose major axis extends in the same direction as the breadth direction of the main body 11. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 3 is readily understood.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out a length Ls0 of the main body that is smaller than a length Lc of the cover. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. As discussed above, Fig. 8A, for example, shows a distance that is equivalent to the length Ls0 of the main body 11 that is smaller than the length Lc of the cover 6, when the septum is not mounted inside the cover 6 (see also page 7, lines 1-5 of the present specification). Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 8 is readily understood.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-5, 7, 10, 13 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 USC § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Willis et al. (US 6,767,340). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Applicant notes that this rejection should be based on 35 USC § 102(e), rather than 35 USC § 102 (b), since the present application has an effective US filing date of August 11, 2003, which is earlier than the issue date July 27, 2004 of Willis et al.

Claim 1 requires a passageway including a slit having a predetermined depth from an outer-end face of a main body and a bore extending from the slit to an inner-end face of the main body. The outer-end face of the main body is on the exterior side of a cavity of a cover, where an insertion member is inserted. Claim 1 also requires the bore being closed by a compressive force applied from the internal wall of the cover to a septum via compression ribs. The present slit-bore-compression rib structure provides a slit that cannot easily be opened, while an insertion member can still be inserted into the septum without difficulty. Also, the present slit-bore-compression rib structure helps avoid forming a dead space inside the passageway, where bubbles usually remain in a conventional needleless port (see page 3, lines 19-22 of the present specification).

Willis et al. fail to disclose a passageway including a slit having a predetermined depth from an outer-end face of a main body and a bore extending from the slit to an inner-end face of the main body, as required by claim 1. On the contrary, Willis et al. discuss a passage 52 extending from a seal interface 74 to a first central opening 27 on an outer-end on the exterior side of the valve member 42, where the feeding tube is to be inserted (see Willis et al. Fig. 7), rather than an inner-end face of the main body of the septum as required by claim 1.

Moreover, Willis et al. fail to disclose the bore being closed by a compressive force applied from an internal wall of the cover to the septum via compression ribs, as required by claim 1. On the contrary, the passage 52 is open, as clearly shown in Figs. 2, 3 and 4, even when stiffening members 80 are sized to be slightly compressed when inserted into the tubular portion to bias the walls 70, 72 (see Willis et al., col. 4, lines 20-30). This is distinct from the present bore being closed by a compressive force applied from an internal wall of the cover to the septum via the compression ribs, as required by claim 1. For at least these reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Willis et al.

Claim 2 is patentable over Willis et al. for reasons similar to those discussed above. Claim 2 requires a substantial passageway including an unpenetrated region having a predetermined depth from an outer-end face of a main body and a bore extending from the unpenetrated region to an inner-end face of the main body. The outer-end face of the main body is on the exterior side of a cavity of a cover, where an insertion member is inserted. Claim 2 also requires the bore being closed by a compressive force applied from the internal wall of the cover to a septum via compression ribs. The reference disclosures fail to disclose such arrangement as recited in claim 2. For at least these reasons, claim 2 is patentable over Willis et al. Claims 3-5, 7, 10, 13 and 16-19 ultimately depend from claim 1 and are patentable along with claim 1 and need not be separately distinguished at this time. Applicant is not conceding the relevance of the rejection to the remaining features of the rejected claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Willis et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 6 depends from claim 1 and is patentable over Willis et al. for at least the same reasons discussed above regarding claims 1-5, 7, 10, 13 and 16-19. Applicant is not conceding the relevance of the rejection to the remaining features of the rejected claim.

Claims 8-9, 11-12 and 14-15 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Willis et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 8-9, 11-12 and 14-15 depend ultimately from claim 1 and are patentable over Willis et al. for at least the same reasons discussed above regarding claims 1-5, 7, 10, 13 and 16-19. Applicant is not conceding the relevance of the rejection to the remaining features of the rejected claim.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration in the form of a notice of allowance is respectfully requested. Any questions regarding this communication can be directed to the undersigned attorney, Douglas P. Mueller, Reg. No. 30,300, at (612) 455-3804.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 22, 2007

By: _____
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